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KEYNOTES

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Vol. V. No. 1. JANUARY, 1929. PRICE SIXPENCE.

MUSIC IN THIS ISSUE

"LONDONDERRY AIR"
Banjo Solo (Finger Style)

"MARY OF ARGYLE"

"JOHN PEEL"
Plectrum Banjo Solos

"LONDONDERRY AIR"
Mandoline Solo

"INTRODUCTION and VALSE"
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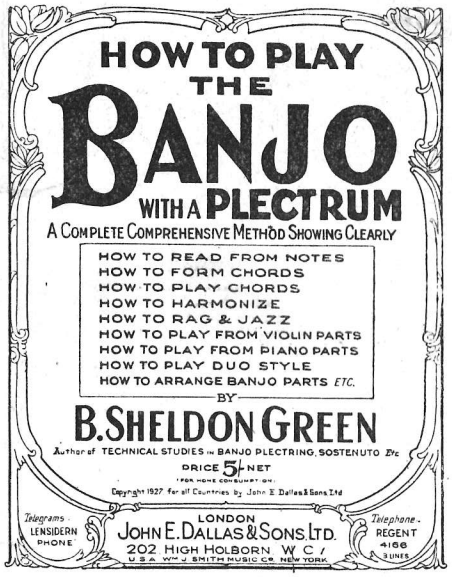
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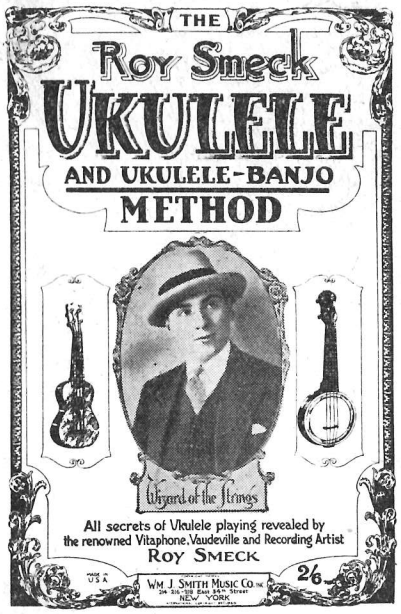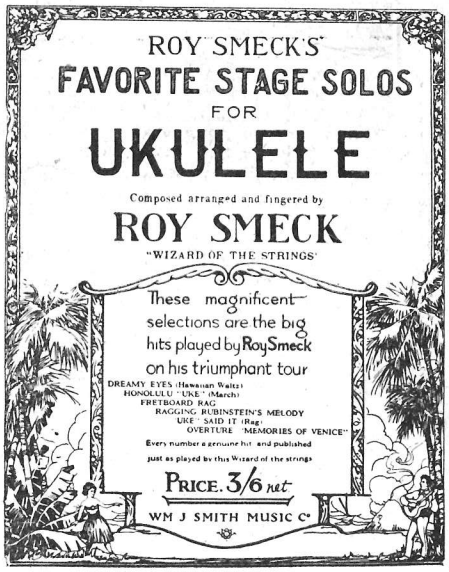

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LEGER LINES.

W. G. Harris will broadcast from 5GB on January 29-31, between 6.30-8 o'clock.

John Pidoux will broadcast from 5GB on January 10, between 8-9 p.m.. He will be featuring the banjo solo, "Ride a Cock Horse," published by John Alvey Turner.

Jan Wien will be broadcasting from London, 2LO, on January 1st, between 6.30 and 8 p.m., and from Glasgow on January 15th, 10.15-10.45 p.m.

We have now the banjo record in stock played by Eugene Earle. See page 2.

BANJO ORCHESTRA AT ST. MICHAEL'S HALL.

"I *SHALL have to put the banjo on a very much higher pedestal than I used to do,*" said the Rev. D. Leonard, when thanking the Aston Banjo Orchestra for their performance at St. Michael's Hall. The orchestra consisted of thirty performers, each having an instrument of the banjo family. The smallest instrument could be put in an overcoat pocket, and the largest had the vellum expanse of a good sized drum. Every banjo corresponded with instruments of a full orchestra, and ranged from the piccolo to the double bass. The orchestra gave a very effective performance. Under the direction of Mr. Harry Marsh they played with crisp vigour and richness of tone. Their programme was "Lodestar" (march), "Cavalleria Rusticana" (intermezzo), "Minstrel Man" (selection), "Beat of the Drum" (march), "Golden Memories" (selection), and "Bells at Sunset" (selection). Mr. J. Robertson and the Nomad Trio, members of the orchestra, contributed additonal items. The orchestral performances were interspersed with songs and monologues. Miss Edith O'Dell sang with great charm and finish "O Flower Divine," "A Birthday," and other songs. Miss Lilian M. Chambers gave humorous monologues, which proved very acceptable to the audience, and Mr. T. C. Boswell was skilful in his renderings of tenor songs. Mr. Harry Curwen sang entertainingly. The concert, which was given in aid of St. Michael's bazaar funds, was well supported, the hall being filled with an audience whose frequent applause showed the measure of their appreciation.

A CONCERT organised for the Roscoe Boys' Brigade Band Fund was held on the 14th ult. at Roscoe Place Chapel, Leeds.

The audience were soon pleased with the unusual array of talent displayed.

Madame Taylor's Serenaders rendered some very pleasing items, including:— "Kilties," "Chanty Gondoliers," "On the River."

Madame Taylor must be congratulated on the technic of these young players, who should advance to the front in the near future.

MEMORISING. By B. W. Dykes.

I AM constantly being asked by players how they can memorise a piece; they say they can play it all right with the music, but immediately the music is taken away they fail to remember it for some unknown reason.

I think the great thing in memorising a piece of music is a player being able to immediately find the necessary chord to fit the melody going through his mind. Unquestionably, every person can memorise a tune to sing or whistle to, but when it comes to playing on an instrument with which they are perhaps a fair exponent, they are lost.

The fault to my mind lies in the fact of their not having even a little technical knowledge which would tell them where to put their fingers for a certain chord or note. Their hand wanders aimlessly up and down the arm of the instrument, lost.

I think that if the majority of players who suffer from this were to read my previous articles in KEYNOTES especially those articles on chord building and inversions, they would obtain such a perfect understanding of the grouping, according to the key they were playing in, that it would become quite natural for them to act upon the melody subconsciously, which I think is done by most of the best players. I say subconsciously, because I think this is the proper expression. For my part, I can be talking to a person about something entirely different to music, and at the same time be playing a piece of music on the mandoline or banjo, without any effort of thought in concentrating upon what I am doing.

I attribute this to the fact that I am so conversant with my instrument that it is a subconscious action which I perform. This is just as easy to my mind as a person performing any other task while taking about something entirely different, or a man walking along the road while filling his pipe and dodging the traffic, although I should not like to do this myself; but it is a matter of comparison that I wish to put before the reader, and I think that if those of you, who cannot memorise, were to get your favourite solo and put the piece of music in front of you and take each movement as a separate study; first of all memorise the actual melody, then see what key the piece is written in, and learn the chords of that key, and play the piece through as written a few times, I am sure this would overcome the difficulty in a very short time.

PRESTON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE first of a series of monthly meetings arranged by Mr. Ernest T. Taylor for the benefit of past and present pupils was held on December 12th.

The following items were rendered:—Misses Fisher and Hunter, duet, "Indian Patrol" (*Grimshaw*); Mr. P. Atkinson, banjo, "Spanish Romance" (*Grimshaw*); Mr. E. Burns, banjoline, "Menuet" (*Beethoven*); Mr. H. Smith, banjo, "Camptown Carnival" (*Morley*); Mr. J. Rogerson, banjo, "Banjo Vamp" (*Grimshaw*); Mr. W. Helm, banjo, "Donkey Laugh" (*Morley*); Messrs. Rigby and Helm, duet, "Sprig of Shillalagh" (*Morley*); Mr. P. Atkinson, tenor banjo, "You and a Canoe" (*Grimshaw*).

A recital was given by Mr. Ernest T. Taylor, who played the following numbers: Banjo (finger style), "The Banshee" (*Grimshaw*) and "Mauna Loa" (*Morley*); banjo (plectrum style), "Sugar and Spice" (*Taylor*), "Old Rustic Bridge" and "Adeste Fideles" (both arr. *Taylor*). The meeting was very much enjoyed by all.

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B.M.G. Matters.

By A. DE VEKEY.

THE steel guitar and ukulele section is held over this month, the space being devoted to cater for those interested in the regular guitar and mandoline, and also to treat on other subjects of current interest.

The guitar solo will be found playable by the average player. The mandoline "duo" arrangement of the "Londonderry Air" is issued by request, and will be found an effective one of this type.

Now on to various questions. One is in connection with

"Steel Strings on the Ukulele." A correspondent writes :—

"As we now use a steel first on the violin, and many guitar players do likewise for the regular playing, why not on the ukulele ? Balalaika players use a steel first, and two gut strings on their instruments also. I think it would strengthen up the melody note a deal. Which string would be suitable ? "

Answer.

While I personally prefer a good gut first, or a good quality silk, we have had recently frequent applications to string both ukuleles and uke-banjos with steel. If you use steel at all, I would suggest using it only on the first string, and having the others gut. An ordinary steel guitar first would do for the purpose. To please a customer recently, we strung up a long scale ukulele as follows :—

Steel first, gut second, copper covered third, and covered on silk fourth, and he was very delighted with the result. An instrument with a machine head is, however, more satisfactory for this stringing than the peg head, or holdfast peg instrument.

Question No. 1 (from the December issue of KEYNOTES. It would be as well to reproduce this—which reads :

"Except from a "spectacular" viewpoint, is there any really practical advantage in having guitars with a lot of extra bass strings ?

They are cumbersome, heavy and expensive. Not that I mind these features, if the extra basses are a worthwhile affair—but are they ? "

Answer.

Quite a lot could be written with regard to this, more than space permits. For many years the writer played with a nine-string guitarist, the three extra basses providing some very useful work in the "bass way." The tuning adopted was D-C-B. This, however, was varied to suit different numbers.

Guitars are made with 7 to 18 strings, but experience proves that there is a limit to the actual "usefulness." Where public performances are concerned, discretion is advisable when using a many-stringed instrument.

"Cumbersome," "heavy," and "expensive" some certainly are. Moreover, an audience expects something out of the ordinary in the way of guitar playing when the performer steps on the platform with a very elaborate guitar with many extra basses. If the piece selected for the performance is specially arranged to "show off" the extra basses to the best advantage, well and good, but I have heard some numbers accompanied on a bass guitar which gave the listener the impression that the player had a little difficulty in getting his thumb on to the necessary bass string, and the first three fingers back to the first three strings for the chord. It gave one the impression that the distance to the bass strings was a bit too far off for the thumb to engage and strike them firmly and decisively. The effect would have been better had the item selected been one that suited the instrument better, but again it might have been a "pet number" for the soloist. The trouble seemed that the guitar player had too many bass strings, too far apart, and in trying to "make an impression" with the very lower strings, got out of his depth, as it were. It would have given him a better chance had the item selected been one more suited to the instrument.

As a chance remark I overheard expressed it—"not much from such a big guitar." Therefore, if you do use a bass guitar publicly make sure you employ the bass strings to the best advantage. A nine-string instrument seems to supply almost all necessary for general purposes. A 12-stringed instrument is as much as one can conveniently manage, if a smart "attack" of the lower strings and a clean pull of the treble is considered. Guitars with many extra basses are a bit on the large, heavy side, and a bit doubtful as regards sphere of general usefulness. However, if you don't mind the weight, size and expense, and the idea takes your fancy, go in for one with either 16 or 18 strings ; you will, at least, have a few interesting experiences.

Another question, No. 6—"Where do they publish all this fine guitar music we hear so much about lately?"

Answer. On the Continent.

Guitar music in abundance is obtainable from many houses in France, Germany, Austria and Spain. Italy as well, of course, which country also issues some very fine mandoline numbers. Of the other countries mentioned, Germany and Austria seem to cater for the guitar very well, and some of the houses issue some very fine catalogues of guitar solos, duets, trios and quartets.

Question No. 4.—"Which do you recommend ?—a guitar with a 'glued' or 'movable' bridge, and do not all the really great guitar players use a lightly built glued bridge model ? "

Answer. Yes. Segovia, Tarrega, Albert, Llobet, Ferrer, Pujol use, or used the glued bridge model. So do the foremost American guitarists, Foden, Bane and Bickford. Also the late Shand, and all the prominent English players.

A guitar with a movable bridge necessitates a different build of instrument as regards thickness of sounding board, setting of neck, height of bridge, etc., and for the characteristic real guitar playing are mostly dull in tone, hard to play and unresponsive.

This is no doubt the reason why all the foremost soloists use guitars of the glued bridge type, for as yet nothing seems to have been made that could be considered an improvement over the orthodox style of construction for this instrument.

Over a period covering a number of years, I have tested, and been present at tests, made by others, of guitars of all kinds. I have played, and heard them played behind screens. I have had the unbiassed opinions of critics, stationed at different parts of halls, and in large open-air spaces where concerts were being given, and in turn have been a listener, but in every instance, the thickly built guitar with the movable bridge signally failed to come up to the glued bridge instrument for tone quality, flexibility, and general responsiveness. Whether any improvements come along to better the orthodox construction remains to be seen, but as I have said, constant testing for over 20 years has conclusively proved that the glued bridge guitar still leads the way for real guitar quality. Nevertheless, if anything comes out in the future that is better,

(*Continued on next page*).

B.M.G. Matters—*Continued.*

I would naturally endorse it, but after many years of experimentations, nothing seems to come along that in any way can be considered a rival to the standard construction. Quite recently, I made some further experiments with that master of adjustments, Mr. F. Winslow, of Swindon. Mr. Winslow played certain guitars of different makes, the writer listening from another room. Guitars were picked up at random, the listener not being aware, or advised as to which guitar was being played. Careful notes were made, and then Mr. Winslow listened while the writer played. In each instance our opinions were identical, the guitars giving the greatest power, sweetness and quality being the guitars built in the orthodox way. Try yourself. Tune them up to the same pitch, play the same piece, and endeavour to get the best out of each instrument.

Allowing that both instruments are good ones, I think I can forcast your decision.

If, however, you just want a guitar that will take steel strings satisfactorily, and serve a useful purpose in accompanying work of a certain kind, then the movable bridge guitar may suit your needs, but a well-made glued bridge model strongly though not too heavily built, should take steel strings, and from a tonal point of view is decidedly the better of the two.

Nevertheless, I have had movable bridge guitars that have been very satisfactory—for a time. Both bass and treble strings were good. Bass rich, treble brilliant. Tone all round sweet, of good quality, combined with power. Instruments fairly responsive, especially for new ones. On these models we particularly noticed that the sounding boards were thinner, and the instruments were more lightly constructed than is customary on the movable bridge model, but after several months' use, an abnormal sinking of the sounding boards took place, and the instruments were discarded. We took the backs off, strengthened the sounding boards, but the additional wood necessary for the purpose seemed to stiffen up the tone, so we strung them with steel strings for the Hawaiian playing ; the last heard of them being from the Front duringthe War.

It therefore seems possible that at some future time we may meet with guitars of this type that may give permanent satisfaction, if a happy medium can be reached, whereby strength to stand the string pressure and lightness of build can be combined in the one instrument, that is, if the movable bridge idea can prove itself to be superior to the usual glued bridge method.

The position summed up, stands :—

To get anything like the tone of the orthodox construction the movable-bridge guitar must be built lightly, but when so built the string pressure causes a " sagging " of the sounding board.

To check this sagging tendency, the instrument must be built more heavily ; neck " tilted " to vibrate the very thick sounding board, which has to be thick to stand the great string pressure, the whole resulting in an instrument stiff to play, and get the tone out, and what tone *can* be got out, lacks the pure, musical tone of the standard construction. So it seems, that whatever experiments have been made along these lines up to now, have not been particularly productive, though those making them are to be commended for the attempts, and while we are on the subject of thick sounding boards it would astonish some to note the sagging that can take place on sounding boards so thick that one would think them capable of standing all the strain that could be put on them by the string pressure used on the instrument.

In next month's issue will appear the answer to the question as to the advisability or otherwise of placing steel rods through the necks of instruments.

Yes, this was tried some years ago in this country on a certain make of banjo, but to my knowledge no British firm of banjo makers adopts this idea nowadays.

THE RIGHT THUMB. By Bernard Sheaff.

THE activities of this member should receive very careful attention, for my experience is that a great majority of beginners do not realize how many and varied are the effects at the disposal of a player with a correct and finished thumb action.

The beginner learns first of all to strike the fourth, third and fifth strings with the thumb, and feels naturally that some progress has been made when recognizable notes can be obtained from these strings. Let us go back a stage behind this, however, and quietly consider the fundamental movement of the thumb ; for we shall then ascertain that the most pronounced difficulty encountered by the beginner is that of gaining definite control of the muscles, which are, of course, worked by a nerve running down the arm and connected with the brain.

It would therefore seem reasonable to suggest that the first attempts with the thumb should be made with some thought for that part of the thumb action which cannot be seen, as well as for the outward and visible effort, and for this reason : the right thumb of the average beginner on the banjo or zither-banjo (and more particularly on the latter instrument) generally has sufficient strength in the muscle to work the thumb, but has probably never tried repeatedly to move the thumb to and fro in a specified direction. What I am trying to make clear is the opinion that muscular force and strength is, at first, less important than control of the nerve. This control is effected by the continued mental effort to make the thumb go just where it should, and nowhere else. Only by thus gently but very firmly concentrating can more and complete mastery of the nerve be acquired. It means that in creating a fine style for the banjo or any other difficult instrument, the hammer-and-tongs method is much less effective than intelligent, firm persistence.

After these few theoretical remarks, something now must be said about the actual kind of movement the thumb should make. The governing rule on this point has been oft repeated ; and is that the thumb should strike the string down *towards* the vellum—not across the next string. And certainly *not* upwards from the vellum !

With a fixed intention to do *nothing* but downward strokes, the beginner should commence by placing his instrument and right hand (and fingers and thumb) in the correct position. The thumb (which is all that concerns us here) should be held just clear of contact with the fourth string, upon which we will first experiment. Now, without moving the hand out of its proper place, raise the entire thumb *up* and *slightly back*, from one-half to three-quarters of an inch (it will be more over the fifth string then) from the strings. Now let the thumb fall *downwards* and *slightly across* with an even and brisk movement, so that at the end of the stroke it is slightly pressing against the *third* string (without sounding G, of course). The thumb, during the course of this follow through movement, has been made to touch the fourth string, and the reason for this " aiming," as it were, at the third string will be found to develop a much more smooth and effective action than an attempt to stop the movement of the thumb directly the fourth is touched.

Now Ready: "A Banjo Frolic"—"Ad Astra"—"Dimples," By Joe Morley.

Correspondence.

Newport, Mon.

To the Editor, KEYNOTES,

DEAR SIR,—I received the banjo safely, and am very pleased with same. The pupil for whom I purchased the instrument is delighted. I would like to say, as a player and teacher of many years standing, that for workmanship, finish and tone your £8 8s. model is absolutely topping value.

During the last 19 years I have played many makes and types of banjo, but never one which required such little effort to play.

The response to the right-hand picking, and ease and smoothness with which the left-hand fingering may be executed is really an eye-opener.

I have purposely delayed writing so that I could give your instrument a good test. Above you have my opinion, and you may make what use you wish of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

W. O.

Durban, Natal, S.A.

July 23rd, 1928.

To the Editor, KEYNOTES,

DEAR SIR,—I would be much obliged if you will let me know through the medium of your KEYNOTES, if while picking Zither Banjo strings, the right hand should be held perfectly still (the movements being made from the finger joints) or if it makes no difference if the right hand moves or shakes during manipulation.

Yours faithfully,

M. A.

[The right hand is not held actually perfectly still, but it is incorrect to pull the strings with a combined action of finger and hand.

The strings should be *struck* with a downward action of the fingers, which work independently of the hand and each other. The joint at the base of the finger (where it joins the palm) should be used more than the middle joint.]

Mr. Ken Kapua (Birmingham), whose delightful performances from the B.B.C. Studio are familiar to all listeners in, writes :—

DEAR SIR,—It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the various "Long Scale" Ukuleles sent me at different times have met with every approval, and I can honestly say that for the money they are unquestionably the very finest obtainable, and I can recommend them to anyone seeking a first class instrument at a moderate figure.

Yours faithfully,

KEN KAPUA.

13, Caledonian Crescent, Edinburgh.

March 31st.

To the Editor, KEYNOTES.

DEAR SIR,—I should like you to find out what you would recommend for hardening finger tips. With best thanks for a reply,

Yours faithfully,

D. C. G.

[Very few fretted instrument players, comparatively, are troubled in this way, except perhaps to feel a slight rawness after a hard night's playing.

The most common cause is the faulty habit of gripping the fingerboard too hard. The best remedy for this is to practice with the idea uppermost of developing a light, firm touch.

If you desire to harden your finger tips and make them less sensitive, bathe them in a solution of alum dissolved in as little water as possible.]

Barbados, B.W.I.

To the Editor of KEYNOTES,

DEAR SIR,—I take this opportunity of expressing my very great appreciation of KEYNOTES magazine. We have no professional guitarists in Barbados, and your magazine gives me some very valuable tips, which I could not otherwise obtain. I can only wish it the very best success, as my individual play has become much more perfect since I've been reading your articles, and without such a magazine, I feel that I should be losing the "Keynote" to my guitar.

Yours truly,

H. B. I.

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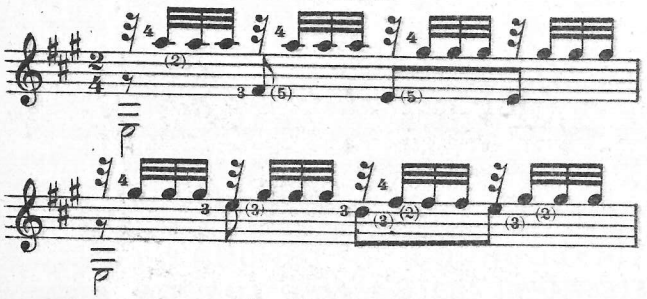
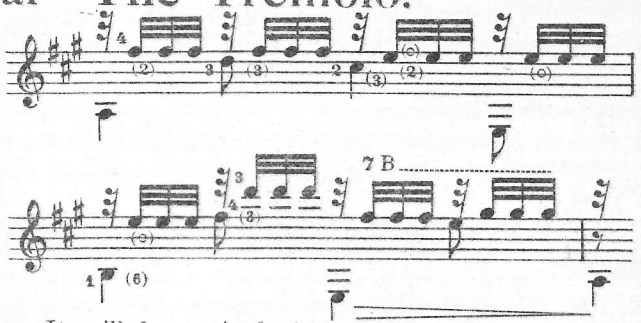
The latest Plectrum and Tenor Banjo Solo—"Sugar and Spice"—now ready.

Notes on the Guitar—The Tremolo.

THOSE who listened on December 16th to Senor Miguel Llobet's guitar recital on the B.B.C., and the fortunate ones who were present at the concert arranged by the Anglo-Spanish Chamber Music Society, will be able to form some idea as to what can be done on the guitar by a wonderful executant who is also a great artist, for Signor Llobet is not only a perfect guitarist, a complete master of all the intricacies of guitar technique, but, according to the best critics, "the most powerfully and most diversely gifted of all his contemporaries," and one of the "three greatest artists on string instruments." He was the first of living players to force the highbrows to regard the guitar as a serious instrument, worthy of the best, and capable of interpreting the highest musical conceptions. In his own compositions, he further increased the already prodigious instrumental technique of the guitar, giving it, in the words of his fellow artist, Senor Emilio Pujol, "a novel esthetic voice . . . colour and polyphony." "Melodia Popular Castellana," which he played for the B.B.C., and "El Mestre," at the concert, are remarkable examples of his "exquisite harmonisations of popular melodies." Having devoted the whole of his life to music, and ever eager to elevate and ennoble his beloved instrument, he always gives more than his programmes promise, however much his world-wide reputation may have led one to expect. Is it to be wondered, then, that a London critic should have been "hardly prepared for such fine exhibition of skill and artistry"?

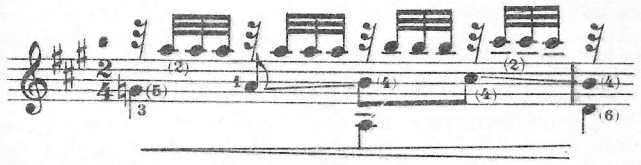
Senor Llobet cherishes the memory of his great master, Francisco Tarrega, and hardly ever gives a recital without introducing some of his music. This time he played two "Tremolos" of his, viz., "Reve" and "El Sueno" in Spanish, and "Recuerdos de la Alhambra." This one has been played several times before in London, by Pujol and Segovia, for instance; but I am not aware that the former has ever been. "El Sueno" is certainly harder to tackle than "Recuerdos," but not so to Senor Llobet, who played it with the greatest apparent ease, pouring forth streams of sweet melody, slurring and gliding with quivering fingers up and down the fingerboard, now with extreme velocity, now with a slower, sustained movement, the tremolo vibrating all the while, and the basses chiming like bells, with an intensity of expression and soulful interpretation that went straight to the heart of the listener.

This beautiful composition is written in A major, in duple time, with the exception of three bars at the beginning, which are in 3/4. Then follow a number of bars—twenty or so—with a repeat, completing a fine introduction. After this comes the tremolo which goes right to the end, with a repeat. The piece ends on two A chords very slowly and softly.

The following few bars illustrate the minor difficulties encounted in a work of this kind :—

It will be noticed that the fingering is carefully marked; it is so in all Tarrega's music. The number placed—whenever possible—before the notes, indicate the fingers of the left hand; those in brackets, the strings on which the particular notes are to be played, the (o) means open string, and 7th B, or similar, the position of the first finger. For instance, in the third bar of the example given, the C♯ is stopped with the second finger on the third string; the first set of E's are on the second string, fifth fret, but those that follow these are played open on the first string, of course.

The working of the right hand is not given here, as it is done in other compositions, but it requires, nevertheless, special attention in the tremolo, for on it depends, in a great measure, the success or failure of the performance. Have you ever observed guitarists playing the tremolo? If so, you will have noticed that the whole of their attention is concentrated on the right hand. The slightest slip with this hand might spoil the whole thing.

The wrist being arched, the fingers well bent and kept constantly close to the strings, the tremolo string is struck—plucked is hardly the word for it—with a slightly downward action, in this order :—third, second, and first fingers, while the thumb plays the bass. When two basses occur together, as in the following example, the higher bass is slided :



Here the tremolo strings are all on the second string, and stopped with the fourth finger. The G♮ on the fifth string, tenth fret, is stopped with the third finger. The first finger can thus easily reach the next bass A on the fourth string, and slide to B on the same string, the thumb playing the A, and so on.

It may be stated here, for the benefit of those who may not happen to know it, that some Spanish artists pluck the strings with the finger nails, while others prefer the finger tips. Which is the best? This is a moot point; players or writers have never been able to agree on this. It is certain that the two styles produce considerably different results. We shall leave it at that. But, whatever you do, see that the right hand takes the least possible part in the working of the strings and that *all the strength is concentrated on the first joints of your fingers.* This is very important.

This is, broadly speaking, the elementary technique of tremolo playing on the guitar, and it is hoped that it has been made sufficiently clear to the inquiring student.

E. L. G.

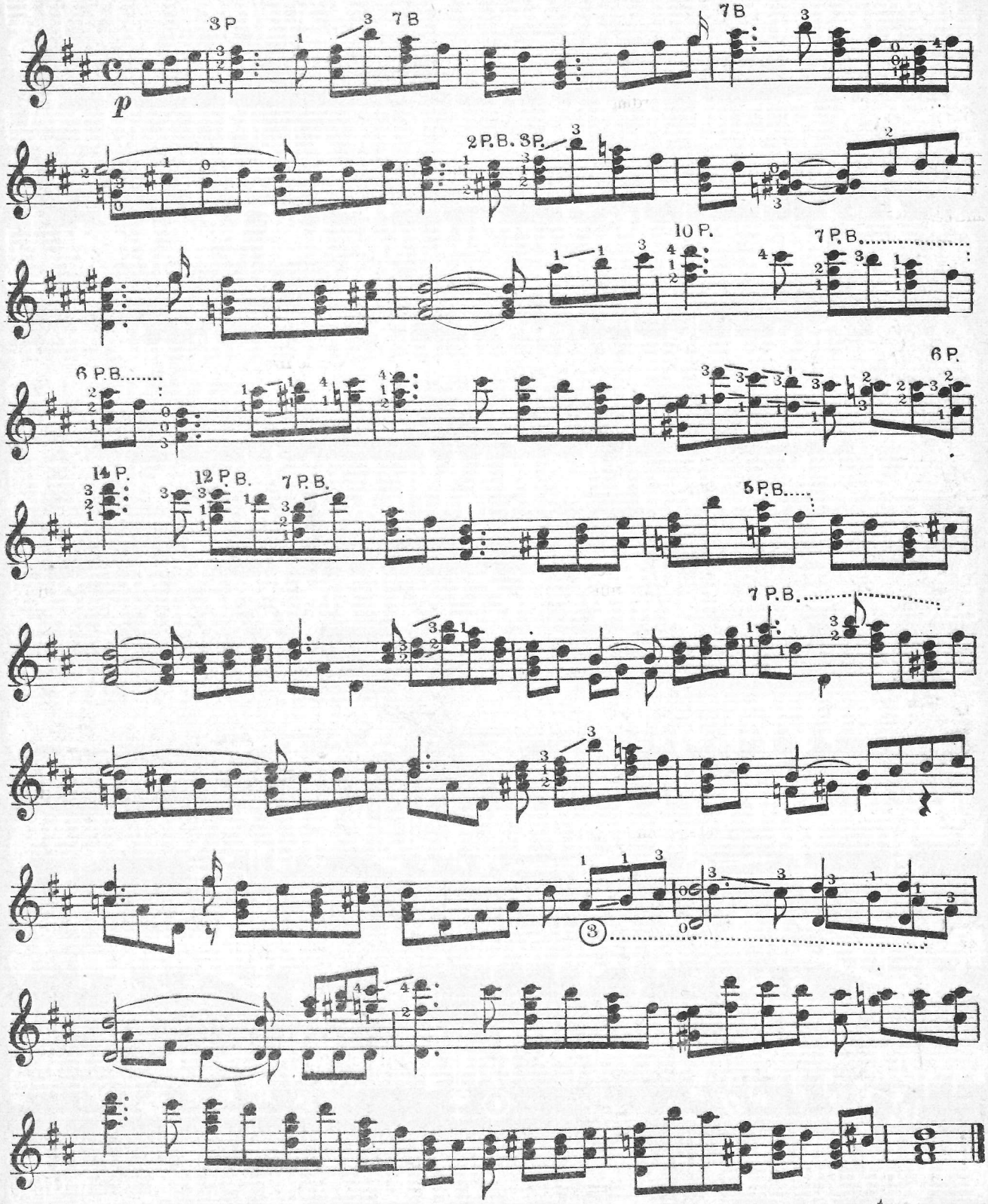
For Tenor and Plectrum Banjoists. "Sugar and Spice," a very effective number.

Tune 4th to D.

Londonderry Air.

Traditional Iris Melody
Arr. by G. CUNDELL.

Arr. by BERNARD SHEAFF.

BANJO SOLO.

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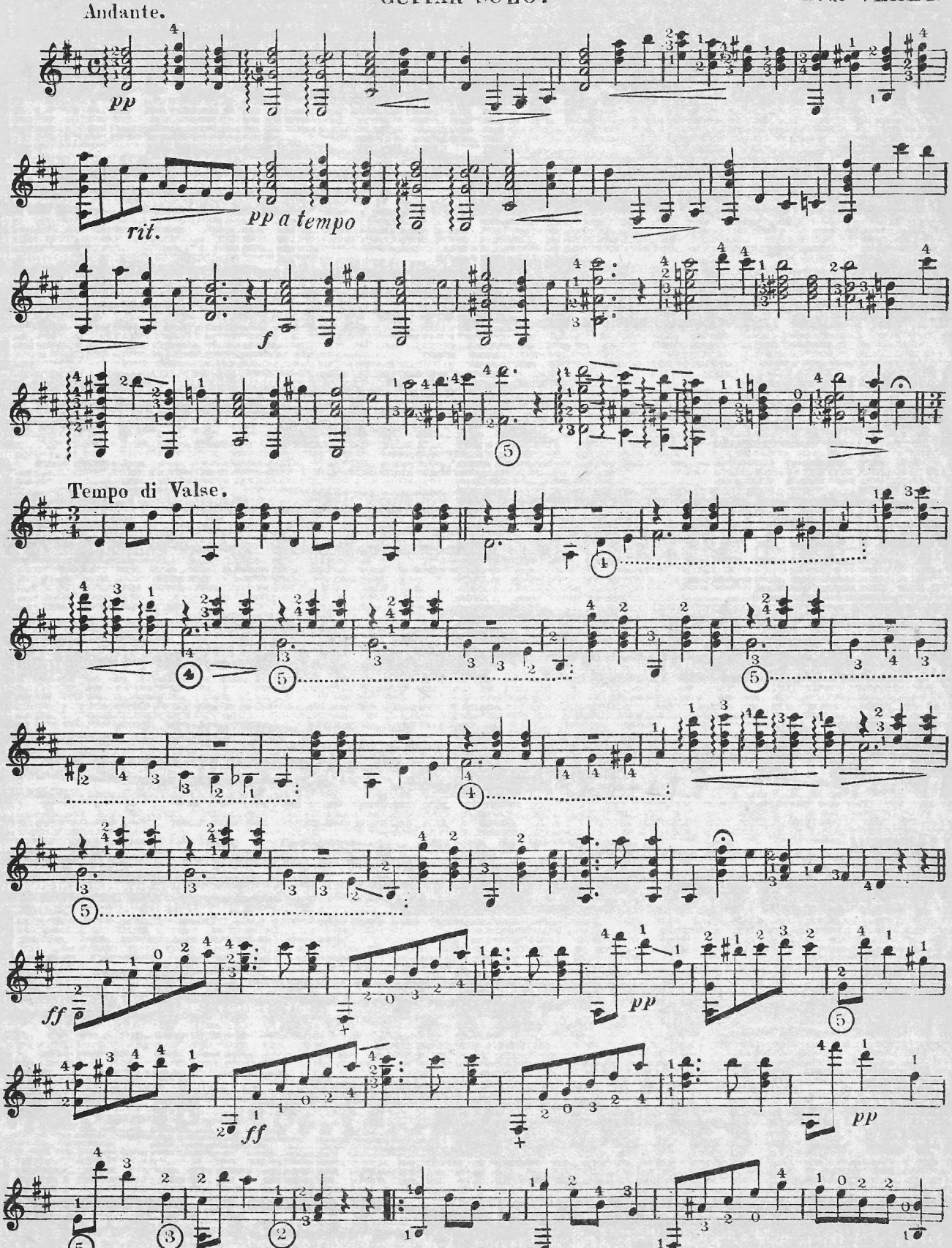
Introduction and Valse.

GUITAR SOLO. A. de VÉKEY.

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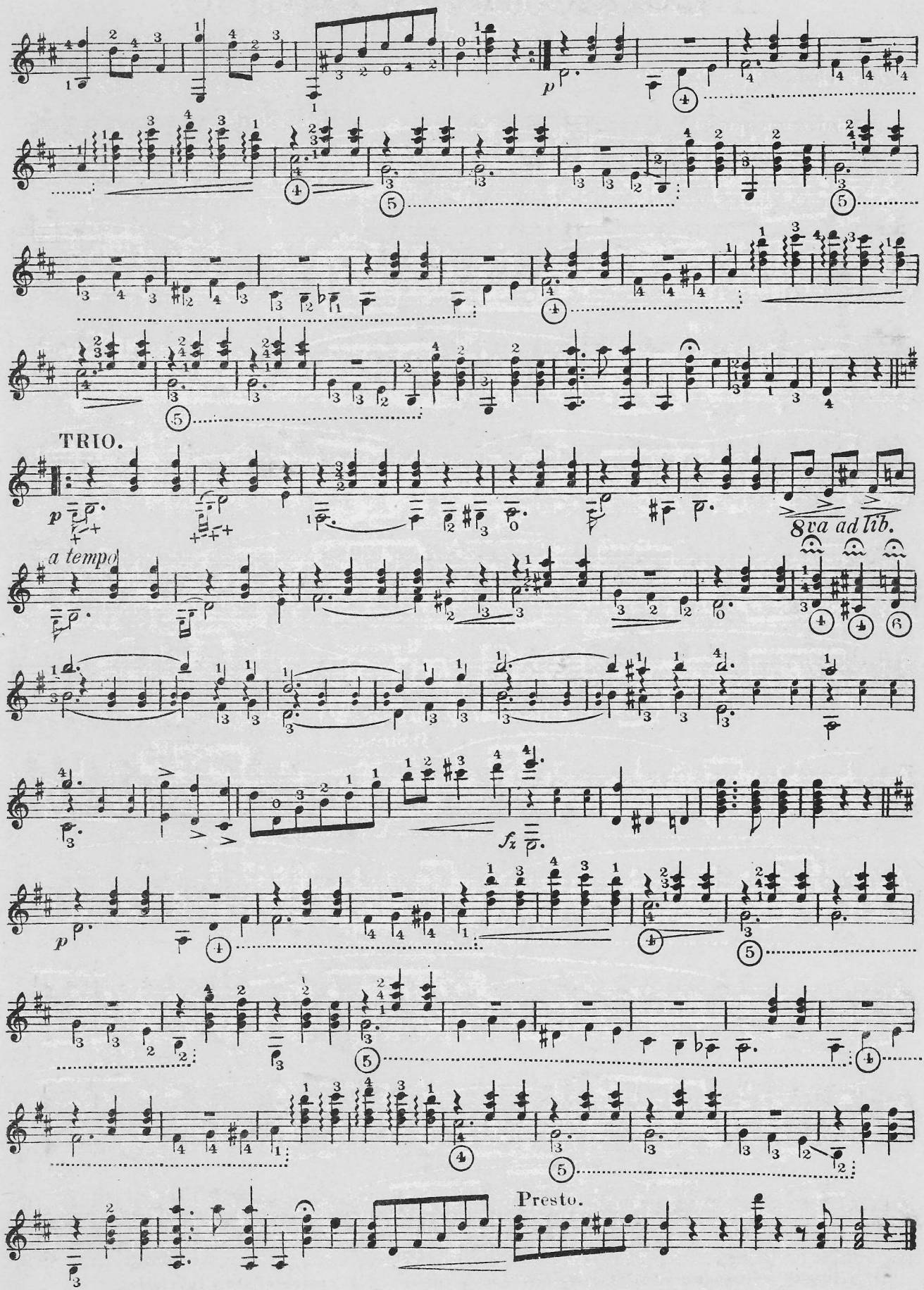
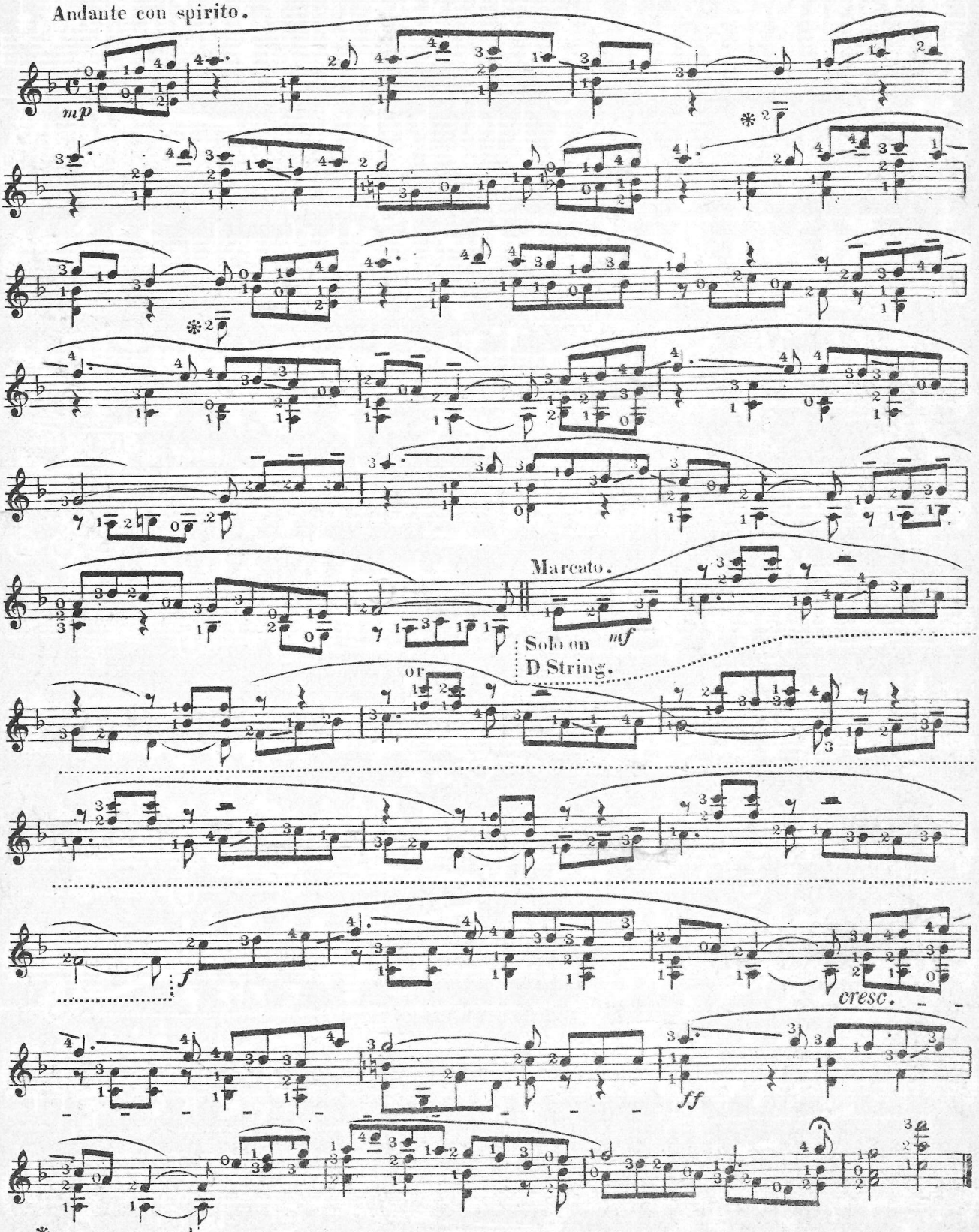
Jan./29.

TRIO.
8va ad lib.
a tempo
Presto.

Londonderry Air.

Melody—"Tremolo."
Accompanying notes—Staccato.

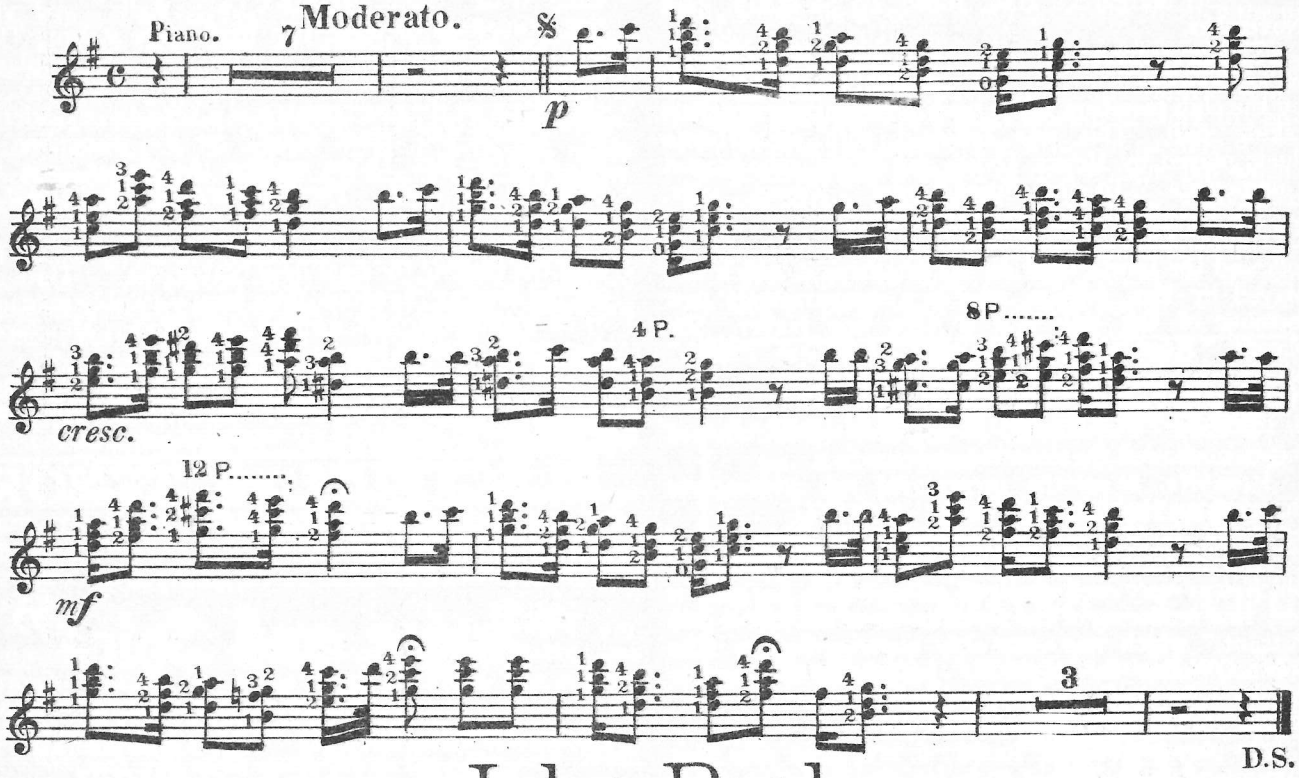
IRISH MELODY.

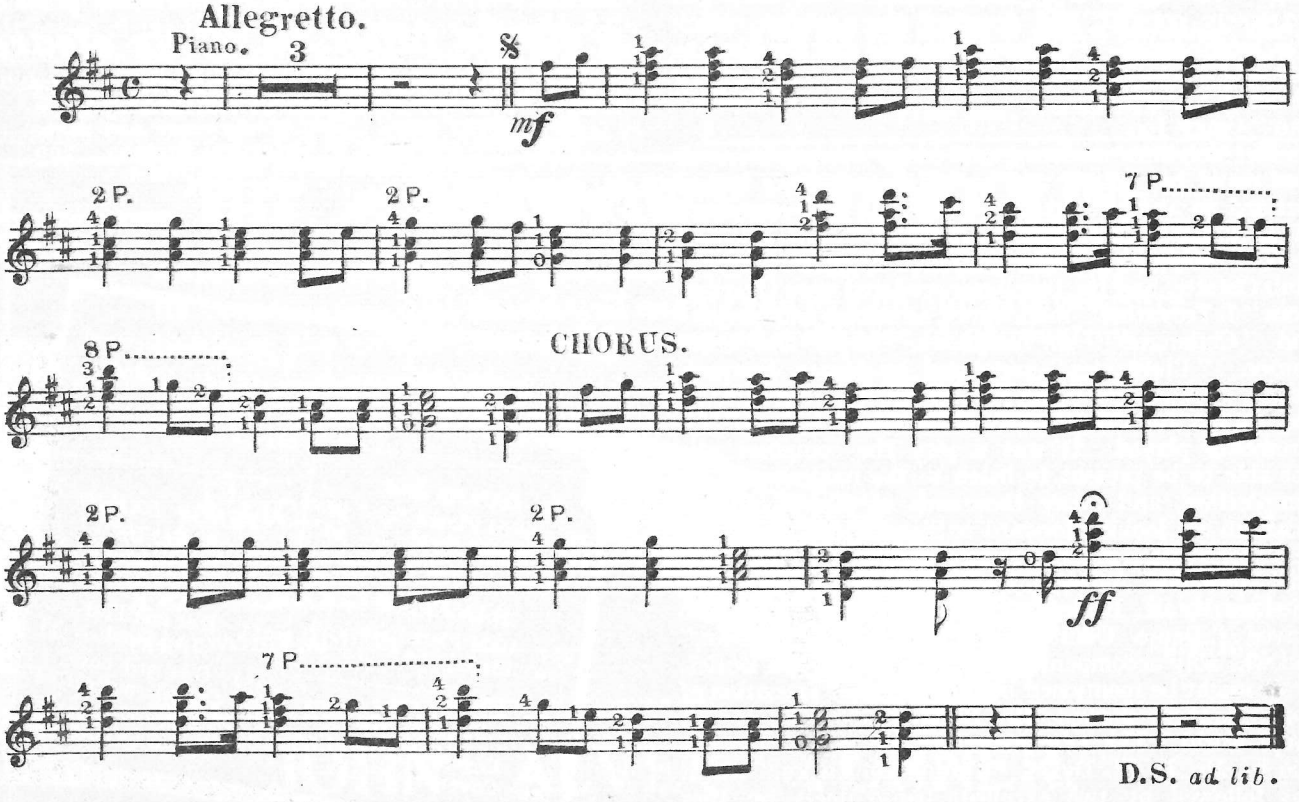
Arr. as a Mandoline "duo"
by A. de VÉKEY.

* Pick with 2nd finger of the left hand.

By kind permission of J. B. Cramer & Co 159, New Bond St. W. 1.

Mary of Argyle.

PLECTRUM BANJO SOLO.

Arr. by ERNEST TAYLOR. Music by S. NELSON.

John Peel.

Arr. by ERNEST TAYLOR. PLECTRUM BANJO SOLO.

East London B.M.G. Concert.

THE East London Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar Club held their first concert of the season at St. Margaret's Hall, Ilford, on Saturday, 24th November.

The programme opened with a very fine rendering of "Tudor Overture." This concerted item was played by the club members, some twenty-five instrumentalists taking part. This was followed with zither-banjo duets played by Messrs. Dykes and Dixon, who played Cammeyer's "To the Front" and "Minuet." Mr. C. W. Murphy then played "Georgia Medley" and "London Club Parade"—zither-banjo solos. Then followed the fourth item on the programme, which was played by Mrs. Jeffries, who is a comparatively new member of the club and a very fine player. She played "Nuts and Wine" and "Japanese Patrol," by Morley, and was very ably accompanied by Miss Willis on the piano. Miss Willis is the official pianist to the Club. The amount of applause which followed this item showed the deserved appreciation.

Item No. 6 on the programme was a complete change from the preceding items.

Mr. B. W. Dykes, the president of the Club, played a very sweet mandoline solo, "Drigo's Serenade," which was very well received, after which he gave a very fine rendering of the Overture from the "Poet and Peasant," which was very ably accompanied by Miss Stewart-Walker on the piano. Judging by the manner in which the audience acclaimed this mandoline item, proves that this instrument has plenty of popularity if only players could be found; it is a great pity that more mandolinists do not go in for the higher branches of playing on this very sweet instrument than at present.

The next item was by Mr. Pat Dixon, who played zither-banjo solos "Dark Town Dandies" and "College Rag." Mr. Dixon is an old member of the Club and extremely popular, and deserved the applause which was freely given. Following this, the last member to join the Club, Mr. J. Taylor Colville, gave two very pleasing plectrum-banjo solos, "Greyhound March" and "Crazy Joe."

Mr. Colville's rendering and stage manner were all that could be desired, and he will be anxiously looked forward to at the next Club concert. This completed the first half of the programme.

The second half of the programme opened with the Club Octette, and the two items rendered were Overture from "Il Trovatore"—mandolines, mandolas and banjos—and "Clubmates" on banjolines, banjos and tenor banjos. "Clubmates," composed by Signor Pasquale Troise, was an extremely fine march, and the style of the music absolutely suited the combination of instruments played. It was a pity the composer was not able to be present to listen to the rendering of his composition, and many thousands of players outside this Club are looking forward to Signor Pasquale Troise' next piece, which in the opinion of many, is long overdue. This item was followed by two well-rendered banjo solos by Mr. M. Butler (of John Alvey Turner's), who played "Banjo Oddity" and "Jovial Huntsman," and was ably accompanied on the piano by Miss Butler.

It might be mentioned here that, as the execution of these numbers showed, Mr. Butler will go far in the banjo world. The next items were a plectrum banjo solo by Mr. B. W. Dykes, "Happy Go Lucky," which was followed by two excellent banjo duets by Miss Jeffries and Mr. Sweetingham, who played "Niggertown" and "Mr. Blackman." Item 13 on the programme was the Club Quartet—Messrs. Walker, Dixon, Morgan and Jones—who played "Honolulu Cake Walk" and "Douglas Cake Walk," and very fine renderings of these two items were given. Then came another mandoline item by Mr. Dykes, who played "Rapsodia Spagnolia" and Toselli's Serenade. An extra item on the programme was a very sweet rendering of "Love's Old Sweet Song" on the mandoline by Mr. Dykes—Mrs. Dykes singing the chorus from the wings of the stage. The audience heartily joined in community singing on the second chorus.

A very pleasant evening was brought to a close by the Club playing the final item "Cromartie." Throughout the evening the proceedings were very ably managed by an enthusiastic club member—Mr. Robert Murchison, who acted as stage manager.

The Club are running another concert in February, and if secretaries of local clubs would like to be present, tickets will be forwarded on receipt of a postcard.

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123	Covered on Steel 6d.		
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Outstanding Banjo Solos: "Banjo Frolic"—"Dimples"—"Ad Astra"—By J. Morley—Now Ready.

Tuning—By Edward Fairs.

AMONG those amateurs who, either from necessity or convenience, have to rely upon their imagination or a pitch-pipe for the tuning of their instrument, I have found frequently that the pitch of the banjo is far too high.

This, at first, does not appear to be of very great importance, and certainly not of sufficient detriment to be classed as a fault.

To the instrument, of course, no harm can be caused, but fingering is hampered, tone is withheld, string breakages occur, and playing generally becomes harder, and more difficult.

In the first of these minor difficulties, the cause is, I think, apparent. Laboured fingering is caused by too much unnecessary effort, and when tuning is pitched too high, the strings become taut, therefore demanding extra force to produce a certain volume of tone.

The fact that tone is withheld is due to a similar reason mentioned in the previous instance. All strings—whether gut or steel—have a stretching quality, and just as a string can be "under-stretched," so too, can it be "over-stretched."

The player will observe, probably, that when strings are tuned a whole tone below the usual degree, the brilliancy goes, and as the tuning is varied, either above or below the correct pitch, the tone diminishes in consequence.

The frequency of strings breaking without any apparent reason is due sometimes to the fact that too much strain is put upon them. It in no way reflects upon the make of string, because even elastic has its limits.

We see, and envy, sometimes, the ease with which professionals tune their instruments. The operation is not nearly so easy as it appears, and really the closest attention is paid the whole time. Quickness and accuracy in tuning is attained only by exercising the greatest care during the earlier studies of the instrument. It is one of the first things to learn and also one of the most important, because it influences playing to a great extent later on.

The ear, trained to detect the slightest difference between two notes of the same pitch, becomes used to its work, and in consequence can trace any discrepancy in tuning.

A great help in tuning is to keep the strings at one pitch as nearly as possible. This, of course, is not always possible, especially with those players who are in the habit of being accompanied by different pianos. As a rule, however, it is not necessary to alter the pitch more than half a tone.

Speed and ease in playing is retarded, and the action of the hands is affected very considerably. The left hand especially has a great amount of work to perform in pressing and keeping the strings in position.

Little notice is taken of this at first, but when the player attains that degree of efficiency which enables him to play several solos, one after the other, the strain will soon make itself felt, and he will begin to wonder.

Try, then, to keep the instrument at its normal tuning by periodically tuning to a piano.

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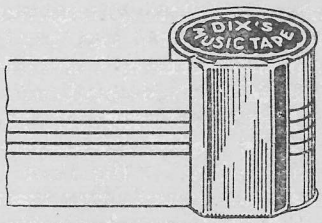

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Now Ready: "A Banjo Frolic"—"Ad Astra"—"Dimples," By Joe Morley.

PLECTRUM BANJO MUSIC IN THIS ISSUE.

By ERNEST TAYLOR.

THE arrangements of "Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill" and "Adeste Fideles," included in last month's KEYNOTES, have proved so popular that the Editor has asked me to arrange something of a similar nature for this month's issue.

"Mary of Argyle" and "John Peel" are both very well known, and I hope that the arrangements of same will be useful to banjo players who will be attending New Year parties and social gatherings.

"Mary of Argyle" sounds best when played in the chord tremolo style, although some degree of efficiency will be required on account of the short duration of several of the notes. The tremolo will have to be done very quickly, and the chord changes made as neatly as possible.

Watch the time and count very carefully, as there are one or two chords with unexpected time values.

This solo is also quite effective when played in the plectrum staccato style, or in the finger style.

"John Peel" is very simple, and will be found easy to play, yet quite effective.

Those players who wish to have pianoforte accompaniments to go with these arrangements should purchase copies of the songs from Messrs. John Alvey Turner, the price of "Mary of Argyle" being 6d., and "John Peel" 3d., postage extra.

BEACHCOMBERS' B.M.G. CLUB.

AT the Beachcombers' B.M.G. Club Meeting for December the following items were played:—

Banjo solos: "Tired Tim," "Color'd Band Patrol," "Dashwood Quickstep" and "Funeral March of a Coon," W. H. Millis; "Mauna Loa," "Clubmates," "Mountaineer March," "Queen of the Burlesque," Mr. Behar; "Dusky Belle," "Cocoanut Dance," Mr. Sparrow; "Dixie Medley," "Big Boot Dance," "Absent," "Fooling the Frets," Mr. Pratt; mandoline solo, "Bolero," Mr. Henry; banjo duets, "To the Front," "Dusky Belle," Messrs. Behar and Edwards; Hawaiian guitar solos, "Hawaiian Love Song" and "Lilliha" Waltz played by Miss Hunter, accompanied on the Spanish guitar by Mr. Henry. These items were beautifully rendered, and were greatly appreciated by all members.

Mrs. Edwards carried out the duties of the club's accompanist in her usual perfect style. Owing to the inability of the Chairman, Mr. Norton Greenop to be present, the chair was taken by Mr. W. H. Millis.

Messrs. Millis and Greenop's Beachcombers' Dance Band was specially engaged for the opening night of the New Palm Club at Westcliff-on-Sea. The opening ceremony was performed by the Mayor, who was accompanied by the Mayoress.

The proceedings opened with the National Anthem, following which the dancing was indulged in with much spirit until the close.

This band is quite a novelty band, as the banjos in this combination are the leading feature, and every item was encored, and everyone present was delighted with the banjo idea.

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THE ARCHED WRIST FOR PLECTRUM PLAYING.

By ERNEST TAYLOR.

IN last month's KEYNOTES I replied to an attack on the arched wrist style of plectrum playing, and as mentioned in my article, I now write more fully as to my reasons for considering that this style is the only one worth while.

I prefer to play with an arched wrist because it is impossible to enjoy perfect freedom of movement without it. This freedom, which can be obtained by means of the arched wrist, is vital to successful technique with the plectrum.

Take, for instance, single string tremolo playing; if a flat wrist is employed it will be found that the hand will never move quickly enough to get away from the sounding of each separate stroke as the plectrum meets the string. A true tremolo consists of a sound as nearly sustained as possible, and the separate strokes should not be heard, not even by the player himself. The only way to obtain a true tremolo is to use the arched wrist, as this method allows the player to move the hand so quickly that the effect is similar to the sustained sound produced by the violinist, 'cellist, etc.

The same may be said of chord tremolo playing. The effect when a flat wrist is employed is most objectionable—far from the beautiful smooth tone obtained by the arched wrist player, who is able to vibrate the strings of his instrument *without rattling them.*

In all staccato playing the hand must be very agile, and I am sure that in this respect the flat wrist players are left very much behind by their fellow players who use the arched wrist.

Then again, when the wrist is arched the thumb and finger holding the plectrum can control it much more delicately. The plectrum should not always be held with the same grip, but the pressure tightened or relaxed so as to allow for tonal variation.

I hope that the above reasons will be quite sufficient proof of the undoubted superiority of the arched wrist.

If any reader has a query to make with reference to plectrum playing, I shall be pleased to deal with same through the medium of KEYNOTES if he will write to the Editor on the subject.

SOUTH LONDON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE 29th and Annual General Meeting of the Club was held at 361, Brixton Road, on Monday, December 3rd, at 8 p.m.

We are pleased to report that Mr. Olly Oakley has accepted the presidency again for the coming year, and Mr. Dave Thomas the vice-presidency.

The officers elected for the coming year are as follows: Chairman—Mr. E. J. Milner. Vice-Chairman—Mr. H. Barker. Hon Sec. & Treas.—Mr. L. C. Poole. Committee—Miss Millen and Messrs. J. W. Smith, A. E. Williams and W. Woodward.

A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Miss E. Fisher (pianist), who has kindly accompanied for us in the past year.

Also, in addition to the usual band practice, the following items were played:

Messrs. Williams and Barker, "To the Front"; Mr. Cockell, "Valse Sympathy"; Miss Millen and Mr. Poole, "Merriment"; Messrs. Williams and Milner, "Lullaby."

The next meeting is on Monday, January 14, at 8 p.m., when all interested players will be made welcome.

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THE LONDON B.M.G. CLUB THIRD ANNUAL DINNER.

THE third Annual Dinner was held at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W., on Saturday evening, the 22nd ult. The guests of the Club included Mr. Ernest Jones from Birmingham, and Mr. Tarrant Bailey, Jnr., from Birmingham.

The Chairman proposed the Loyal Toast.

The toast of the Banjo, Madoline and Guitar was proposed by Mrs. A. D. Shuter, who said that although a member of the Club, she did not play either of the three instruments, but she was so fond of them that she felt it an honour to be called upon to propose the toast.

Mr. Llewellyn Davies in proposing "Our Visitors" said how pleased the Club were to see so many there; in fact, the visitors outnumbered the members, but he wished to heartily welcome them on beha'f of the Club. This toast was responded to by Mr. Robertson, who gracefully thanked the Club for their hospitality.

The Chairman, in proposing "The Out-going and In-coming Presidents" remarked that he very much regretted the unavoidable absence of the In-coming President, Mr. Sheaff, through illness, but he felt confident in stating that the progress which has been made during the past year under the guidance of Signor Troise (the retiring President) would be maintained under the Presidentship of Mr. Sheaff. The President (Signor Troise) in replying, thanked the Club for the support they had given him during his term of office, and said that he would give the Club all the support he could in the future as he had in the past.

In the absence of Mr. Cammeyer through sickness, Mr. Llewellyn Davies proposed "The Chairman." The Chairman in replying thanked all members for their loyal support, and pointed out that his chairmanship must necessarily cease at the end of this year.

The following interesting programme was given after the dinner :—

The National Anthem. 1. Madame Troise (piano), "Fantasie Impromptu in A♭" (*Chopin*) and "Keyboard Kapers." 2. Mr. F. Musselbrook (zither-banjo), "L'Hirondelle" (*Cammeyer*). 3. Mr. E. Jones (zither-banjo), "Abide with Me" and "Darktown Dandies" (*Morley*). 4. Mr. Tarrant Bailey, Jnr. (banjo) "Cupid Serenade" (*Morley*) and "Medley" (*Morley*). 5. Miss Shuter and Miss Holland (zither-banjo duet), "Piccaninnies' Christmas" and "Humoresque" (*Cammeyer*). 6. Mr. J. Morley (banjo), "Ad Astra," "Freckles" and "Kingdom Comin'" (*Morley*). 7. Signor Troise (banjolin), "Andante Polonaise" (*Mezzacapa*) and "Salut d'Amour" (*Elgar*). 8. Miss Winter (banjo), "Mauna Loa" (*Morley*). 9. Mr. Tarrant Bailey, Jnr. (tenor banjo solo). The National Anthem.

The enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the Chairman thanking those who had so kindly assisted in such a delightful programme.

Volumn IV of KEYNOTES, from January to December, 1928 contains the following Banjo Solos, arranged finger style, in addition to Solos for the Guitar, Ukulele and Steel Guitar, etc., and articles of interest.

Ain't that a Grand and Glorious Feeling	**Tired Hands**
The Doll Dance	**C'est Vous**
I Ain't got Nobody	**Worrin'**
Where, O Where do I Live	**Bless her Little Heart**
Charmaine	**My Inspiration is You**
Nicolette	**Stay out of the South**

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THE LONDON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE meeting was opened at 8 p.m. by the chairman, who welcomed Mr. Clifford Essex, who was the guest of the Club for the evening. There were two vice-presidents present, Mr. Joe Morley and Mr. Bernard Sheaff.

Compulsory playing took place, when the following items were played :—

Mr. Mostyn Davies, "Handy Jack" (*Cammeyer*); Mr. A. Brett, "Sammy on Parade" (*Cammeyer*); Mr. J. R. Aldred, "State Ball" (*Ellis*); Miss Holland, "Mazurka" (*Cammeyer*); Mr. A. J. Coates, "Apollo March" (*Sullivan*); Mr. A. Jorree, "Waltz Southborough" (*Jorree*); Mr. M. L. Smith, "Spanish Romance" (*Grimshaw*); Mr. M. Dolby, "Circus Parade" (*Morley*); Mr. H. Gibbons, "Butterfly" (*Morley*).

Mr. H. P. Woollard gave the member's recital, playing "Christmas Carol," "Lullaby and Waltz," "Humoresque" and "Serenade," all by *Cammeyer*. The recital was greatly enjoyed by all present. Mr. M. D. Berry will give the member's recital in January.

After refreshments the community items were played, when Mr. Morley led the members through "The London Club Parade" (*Morley*). The following were chosen for community items in January :—"It's Monday Night" (*Cammeyer*), "Niggertown" (*Morley*), "Lancashire Clogs" (*Grimshaw*) and "King of Clubs" (*Musselbrook*). Later in the evening, during the voluntary period, Mr. Joe Morley played two of his new compositions in his own inimitable style.

The following is the Committee for 1929 :—President, Mr. Bernard Sheaff : Vice-Presidents, Mr. A. D. Cammeyer, the Right Hon. Viscount Canterbury, Capt. Denzil Cope, Mr. J. P. Cuninghame, Mr. Joe Morley, Signor Mario de Pietro and Signor Pasquale Troise. Members : Miss Leathwick, Miss M. Winter, Mr. H. M. W. Ackerman, Mr. Llewellyn Davies, Mr. M. Dolby, Mr. P. Lavender.

The new and old Committees (1928/9) will meet at the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters, Tottenham Court Road, W.C., at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9th.

The next general monthly meeting will take place at the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters, Tottenham Court Road, W.C., at 8 p.m. on Monday, January 14th next.

STRAND B.M.G. ORCHESTRA.

THE usual monthly meeting of the Derby and District, "Strand" B.M.G. Orchestra took place at the Studio, Messrs. Edgar Horne & Co., The Strand, Derby, on Saturday afternoon, December 1st, 1928, when a very interesting programme was rendered by those present.

Concerted item, "Tune Tonic" (*Grimshaw*); sextette banjos, "Circus Parade" (*Morley*), Miss Dyer, Mrs. Dawson, Messrs. Ellis, Chattoe, Allport, Mason, Horrobin, Jones; mandoline duet, with guitar, "Beda," (*Hudson*), Misses Betteridge, Dawson, Mr. A. Dawson; banjo and tenor banjos, "Happy Go Lucky" (*Grimshaw*); concerted item, "Tattoo" (*Grimshaw*); mandoline and ukulele duet, "Ramona" (*Gilbert-Wain*), Mrs. Dawson, Miss H. Dawson; banjo trio and guitar, "El Apasionado Tango" (*Leonardi*), Mrs. Dawson, Mr. Chattoe, Mr. Allport, Mr. A. Dawson; concerted item, "Gold Diggers' March" (*Morley*); mandoline and ukulele duet, "I Want You" (*W. Herrin*), Miss H. Dawson, Mrs. Dawson; banjos and tenor banjo, "Beat as you go" (*Grimshaw*); concerted item, "Mexican Ride" (*Grimshaw*); mandoline duet, "Memories d' Amour" (*Clara Ross*), Misses H. Betteridge, H. Dawson.

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PARKSTONE B.M.G. CLUB.

THE PARKSTONE Banjo Club held a fortnightly meeting on 5th December, at St. Aldhelm's Institute, Branksome, when the following numbers were played :

Ensemble : " Au Revoir," " Tattoo," " Colored Major," " My Inspiration is You," " Valse Sympathie," " Take Your Pick," and " Georgia Medley."

Solo Items : " To the Front " Mr. Trewin ; " Nigger Minstrels," Mr. Stanley ; " Londonderry Air," Mr. Rose ; " Barcarolle," Mr. Hatfield ; " A Spanish Romance," Mr. Wareham ; " White Coons," Mr. Oliver. Duets : " Return of the Regiment " Messrs. Trewin and Wareham ; "Studies in Syncopation," Messrs. Strike and Oliver.

Particulars of membership may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. Rose, 216, Bournemouth Road, Branksome.

NORTH LONDON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE North London B.M.G. Club held their third meeting on 26th November at the Adult School Hall, 341, High Road, Wood Green. After " Niggertown " and " Kilties " had been played as community items, a scheme of request playing was inaugurated, and under this scheme the following solos were played : Mr. A. J. Coates, " Apollo March " ; Mr. Luxton, " Banshee " ; Mr. Eldridge, " On the Road," ; Mr. A. J. Haigh, " Return of the Regiment " ; Mr. Binks, " Humoresque " (*Cammeyer*) ; Miss Monks, " Smoky Mokes."

Mr. E. T. Coates played " Clubmates March " as a mandolin solo, and it was decided to adopt this piece as a community item.

The Club is now growing rapidly, and the Secretary will welcome any perspective members at any of the future meetings, which are to be held on the fourth Monday in each month at the above adress.

BRISTOL B.M.G. CLUB.

MEETING, held November 16th, 1928. Club : " Clubmates " (*Pasquale Troise*) ; " My Inspiration is You " (*H. Nicholls*) ; " Nigger Minstrels " (*Grimshaw*) ; " Gloriana Waltz " (*Glynn*) ; banjo duet, " Pro Patria" (*Grimshaw*), Mr. Ball and Son ; banjo duet, " Mr. Jollyboy," (*Grimshaw*), Messrs. Sharp and North ; banjo solo, " Circus Parade " (*Morley*), Mr. Alf North ; banjo quartet, " Blaze Away," Messrs. Saunders, Sharp, Mulligan and North ; mandoline duet, " Alexis," (*Asche*), Miss Bray and Mr. Matthews ; Club, " Tattoo " (*Grimshaw*) ; " White Coons " (*Payne*) ; " Black Bess " (*Ellis*) ; " Cromartie " (*Heath*).

A very enjoyable evening, and all keen to have a successful Winter season. Ladies heartily invited. Guitars specially required. Full particulars, Alf North, 42, Knowle Road, Totterdown, Bristol.

November 30th, 1928. Club : " Tattoo " (*Grimshaw*) ; " Clubmates " (*P. Troise*) ; " My Inspiration is You " (*H. Nicholls*) ; " Nigger Minstrels " (*Grimshaw*) ; " Tired Hands " (*Piandosi*). Quartet, banjolin, banjo, mandoline and banjos, Messrs. Matthews, Mulligan, Warren and Young, " Take Your Pick," (*Grimshaw*), " Toy Town Artillery " (*E. Lynton*) ; Club, " Cromartie" (*Heath*) ; " Black Bess " (*Ellis*) ; " Queen of Burlesque " (*Tilley*) ; banjolin and guitar duet, " Serenata di Gondoliera" (*Parlotti*), Messrs. Matthews and Mulligan ; banjo solos, " Banjo Frolic " (*Morley*) ; " Ad Astra " (*Morley*), Alf North ; banjo duet, " Jacko on Parade " (*Morley*), Mr. Ball and Son ; Club, " White Coons " (*Payne*). Hon. Accompanist, Mrs. North.

Meetings held fortnightly. Full particulars, Alf North, 42, Knowle Road, Bristol.

EAST LONDON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE monthly meeting of the East London B.M.G. Club was held at the Elite Dancing Academy on the 26th November. There was a good attendance of members and friends, and the following items were rendered :—

Mr. Colville, plectrum banjo, " Tattoo" ; Mr. Custerson, plectrum banjo, " Stars are Shining " ; Mrs. Jeffries, banjo, " Jollity " ; Mr. Sweetingham, banjo, " Night Club Parade " ; Mr. Jones, banjo, " Banjo Frolic " ; Messrs. Walker and Morgan, zither-banjo duet, " Nigger Minstrels " ; Messrs. Murchison and Dykes, zither-banjo duet, " Spanish Romance " ; Mr. Gayes, banjo solo, " Bonnie Scotland " ; Messrs. Dykes and Dixon, banjo duet, " Dimples " ; Miss Titmuss, Mr. Hudson and Mr. Aitken, trio, banjo, banjoline and guitar, " Adelaide " Waltz ; Mr. Ellis, banjo, " Minstrel Man " ; Mr. Dykes, mandoline, " Sunshine of Naples " ; Mr. Willis, Mrs. Jeffries, Miss Willis, trio, banjoline, banjo, piano, " Hibernia " ; Community playing, the Club, " Banjo Oddity."

Miss Stewart-Walker and Miss Willis very ably accompanied the various items on the piano.

The following new members were proposed and enrolled : Mr. A. W. Graham, 34, West Bank, Stamford Hill ; Mr. T. Colville, 35, Sherry Avenue, East Ham ; Miss M. D. Titmuss, 151, Upton Lane, Forest Gate.

The success of the above Club seems assured, and members are enrolling from a very wide area. The Club, which was originally the old " Banjo Oddities," is now boasting some extremely fine players and social events of the season include two concerts and four dances.

Any player of these three instruments will always be welcomed to the Club meetings, which are held on the last Monday in every month at the Elite Dancing Academy, High Road, Ilford.

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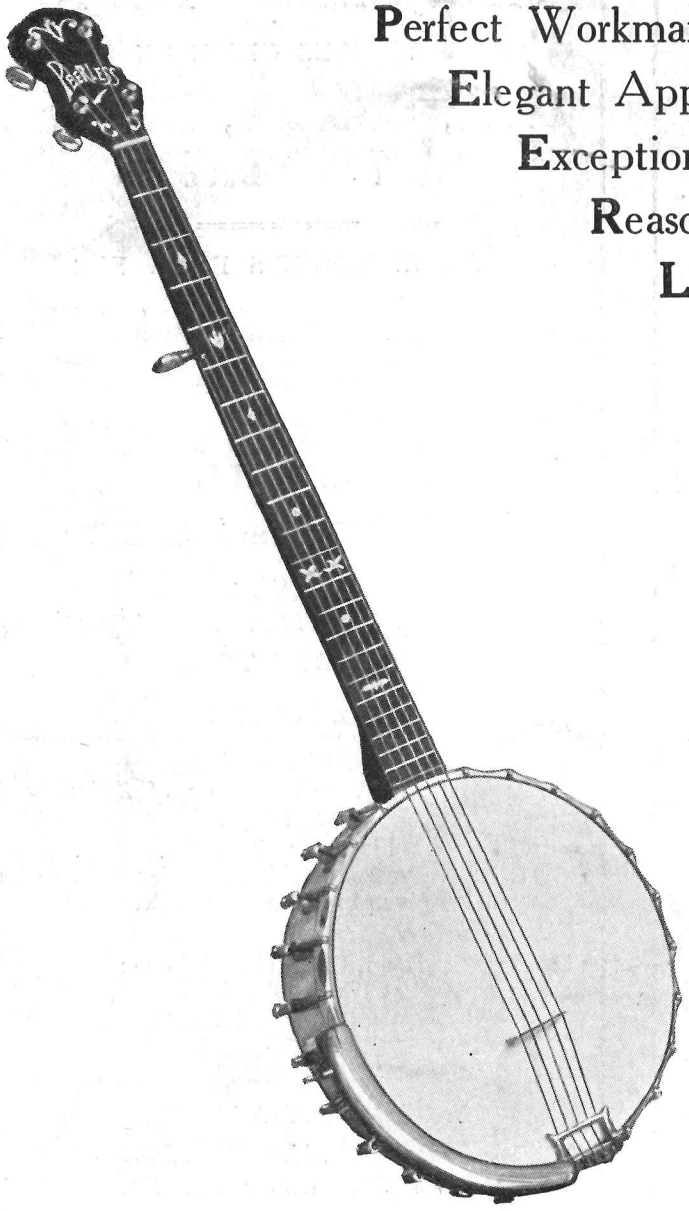

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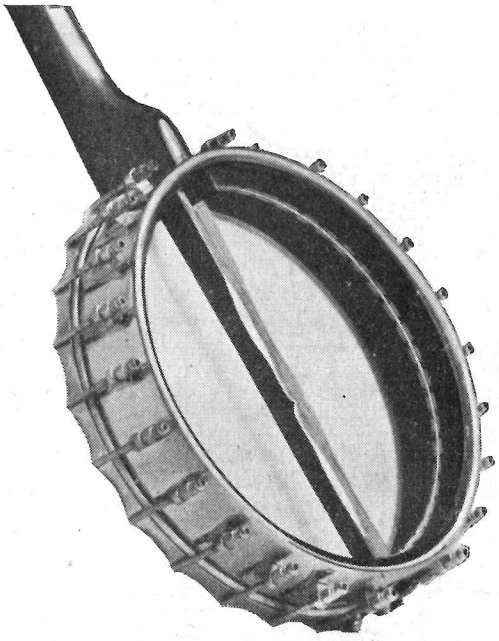

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